

**CROHN'S &
COLITIS UK**

**THOMAS
WOLFE**



Meet our cats in their very own video and read along at crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/cats



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Narrative development by Crohn's & Colitis UK.

Meet our Crohn's and Colitis cats was produced with people affected by Crohn's and Colitis. Thank you to all of the children, family members and healthcare professionals who have been involved - from sharing your experiences and ideas to reviewing drafts along the way. We couldn't have done it without you!

Thomas Wolfe

The story and pictures in this book came from the amazing mind of Thomas Wolfe. Tom is an author, illustrator and father living with Crohn's Disease. He's passionate about helping others open up about their Crohn's and Colitis cats, and know that they can still achieve their dreams.
misterwolf.co.uk

Crohn's & Colitis UK

We're the UK's leading charity for Crohn's and Colitis. We want improved lives today, and a world free from Crohn's and Colitis tomorrow.

We developed Tom's story to help support all children affected by Crohn's and Colitis - whether they have the condition themselves, or know someone who does. We'd love to know what you think - please email publications@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk with your feedback.

We're here for everyone affected by Crohn's and Colitis. If you need information, benefits advice or just someone to talk to, call our confidential Helpline on **0300 222 5700** or email helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk

This book is available for free thanks to our generous supporters. Find out more about our work and how to get involved at crohnsandcolitis.org.uk

How to use this book

Hello! I'm Riley - I like drawing, dancing, and playing football with my brother Bryn. Oh, and I also have Crohn's Disease!

Crohn's makes me feel unwell sometimes. My stepdad Owen has Ulcerative Colitis, which is sort of similar, so he feels unwell sometimes too.

We've left blank spaces so you can write in the condition you or your family member has - just look out for the _____

And on the very last page of this book we explain some of the words we've used.

Crohn's and Colitis are invisible. That means you can't see them because they're inside your body.

To help explain what's happening on the inside, we like to talk about Crohn's or Colitis as if it's a cat. Sometimes our Crohn's and Colitis cats are really big and bother us, sometimes they're really small and leave us alone. Sometimes they're fussy and don't listen. No one else can see them, but we know they're always there. We have to take good care of them - and they're only a small part of who we are.



Now, let's meet them!



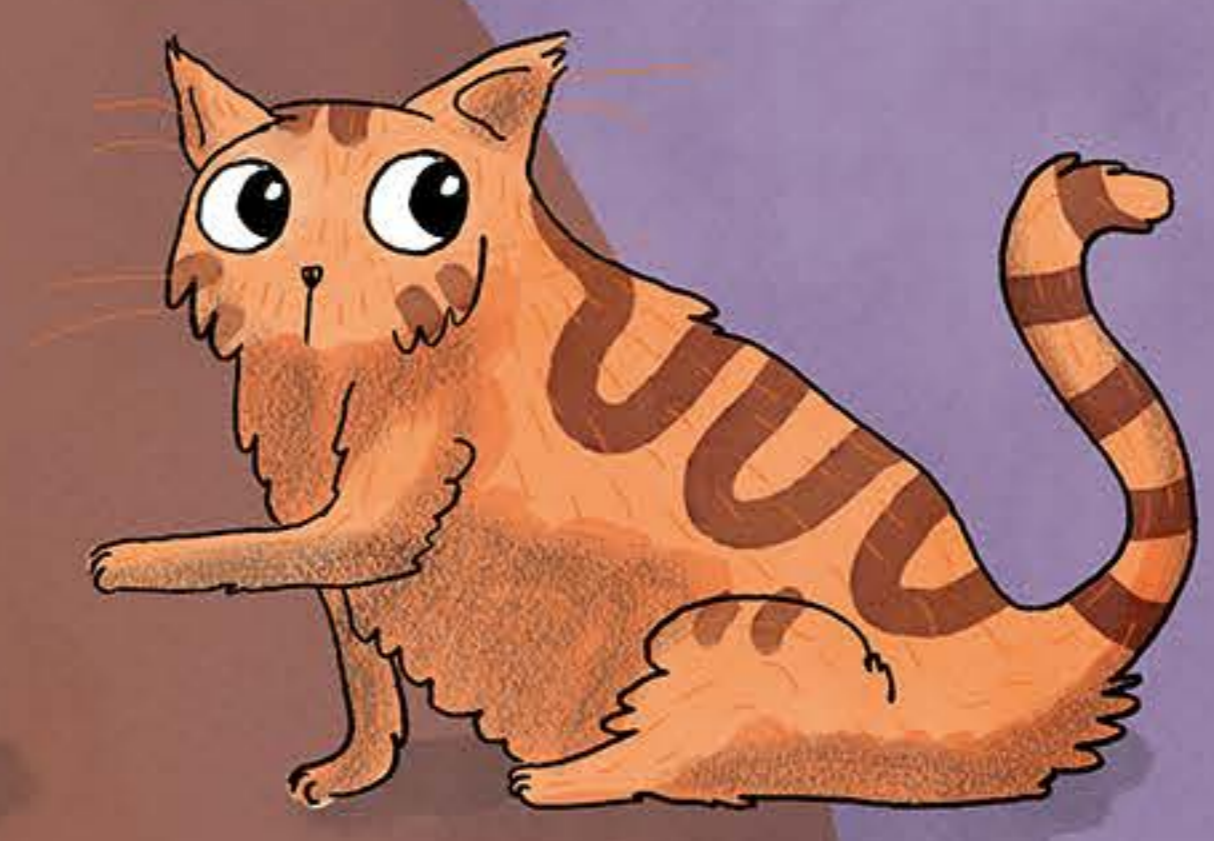
This is my stepdad Owen and his _____ cat.

Nobody can see our cats but they're always there.

My name is Riley and this is my _____ cat.



Sometimes my cat takes me to the toilet a lot, and this can make my tummy hurt.

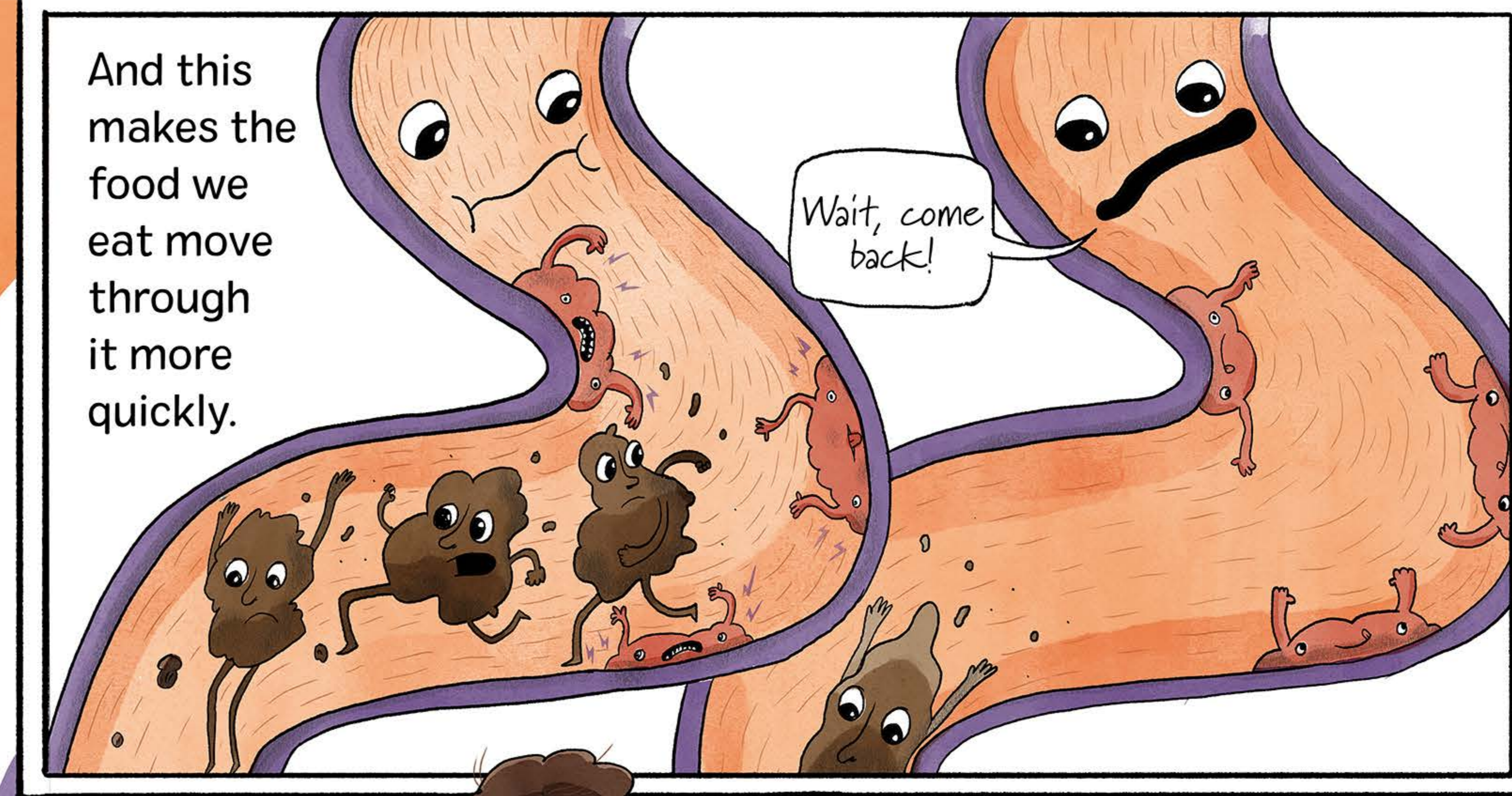


Owen's cat does the same to him. Sometimes he also finds blood in his poo.





This happens because inside our tummies, in a place called the gut, it is very sore.



And this makes the food we eat move through it more quickly.

Because it moves so fast, we don't always get the energy we need...



...which can sometimes make us feel quite tired.

When this is happening, it's called a flare.



When this is not happening,
it's called remission.

In these times we feel
pretty OK.





No two Crohn's or Colitis cats are the same.



We try to keep our cats small by always taking our medicine and looking after them.



But everyone's cats are different. They can be fussy and don't always do what we want.



My brother Bryn and my mum don't have Crohn's or Colitis cats, so during a flare they make sure me and Owen are OK.



Sometimes we flare at different times and some flares are worse than others. It's good to talk to someone else who knows how it feels.



With a Crohn's or Colitis cat we can't always eat what we want. And when my cat flares I might need to have a liquid food diet.



Sometimes I get to drink a special milkshake.

Other times it's through a tube in my nose, which makes me look like a robot.



I don't mind looking like a robot. I call myself **R1L3Y**...

...and bleep at my brother.



Having a Crohn's or Colitis cat means we have to rest more than other people, but it's OK to take time out when we need it.



My friends still come over to watch films and play games when I'm not well so I don't feel like I'm missing out.



Sometimes I can't go to school because I'm at the hospital. When I'm there I might have blood tests.



Owen's not feeling well. Can I help with your school work instead?

When I miss school I have to catch up with my work at home.

Yes, thanks Mum!



Our doctors and nurses have helped us find the right medicine for our Crohn's and Colitis cats, but it does take time.



Every time I remember to take my medicine I get a star on my chart. My stepdad Owen helped me set up an alarm on my phone so I don't forget.



MON	★	★			
TUE	★	★			
WED	★	★			
THUR	★	★			
FRI	★	★			
SAT	★	★			
SUN	★	★			

REWARDS:

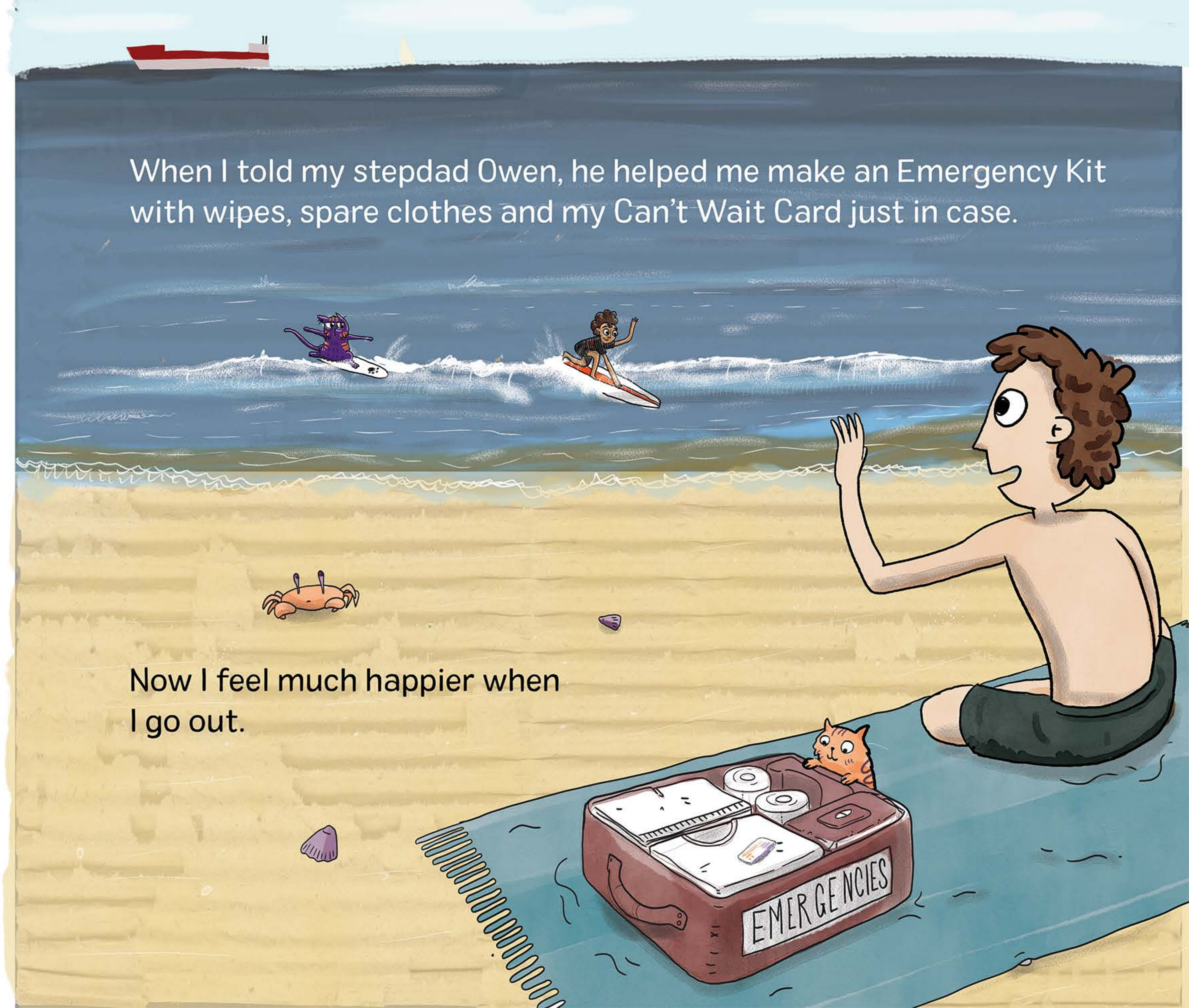
36 ★s	MAGAZINE
72 ★s	TOY
100 ★s	DAY OUT

Being in charge of my medicine helps me feel more in control of my cat.

I was worried about having an accident when we were out, so I'd sometimes prefer to rest at home.



When I told my stepdad Owen, he helped me make an Emergency Kit with wipes, spare clothes and my Can't Wait Card just in case.



Now I feel much happier when I go out.

It's hard when Owen's _____ cat flares because I can't spend as much time with him. If he's not well he can't always do as much around the house...

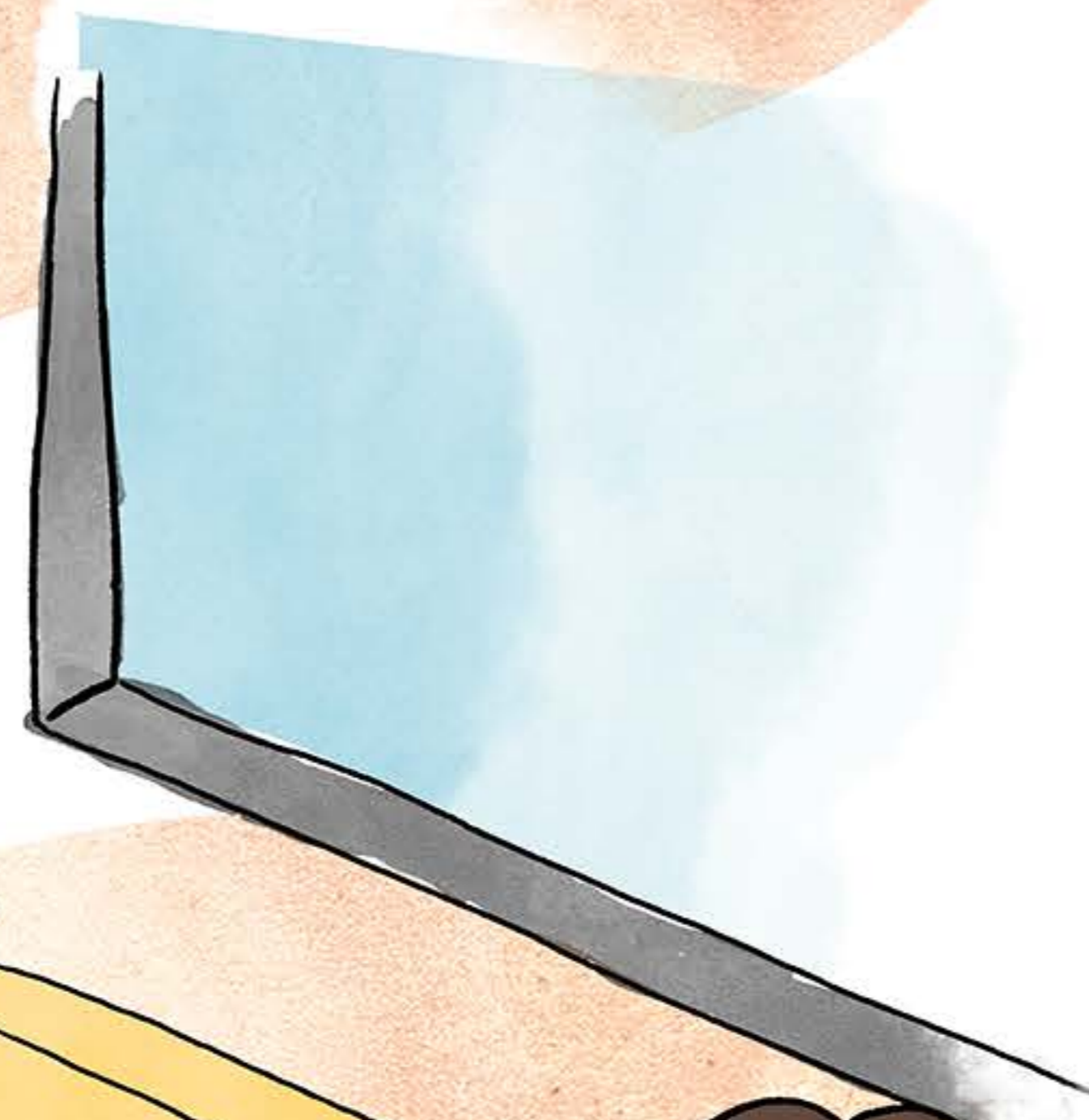


...so me and Bryn help instead.

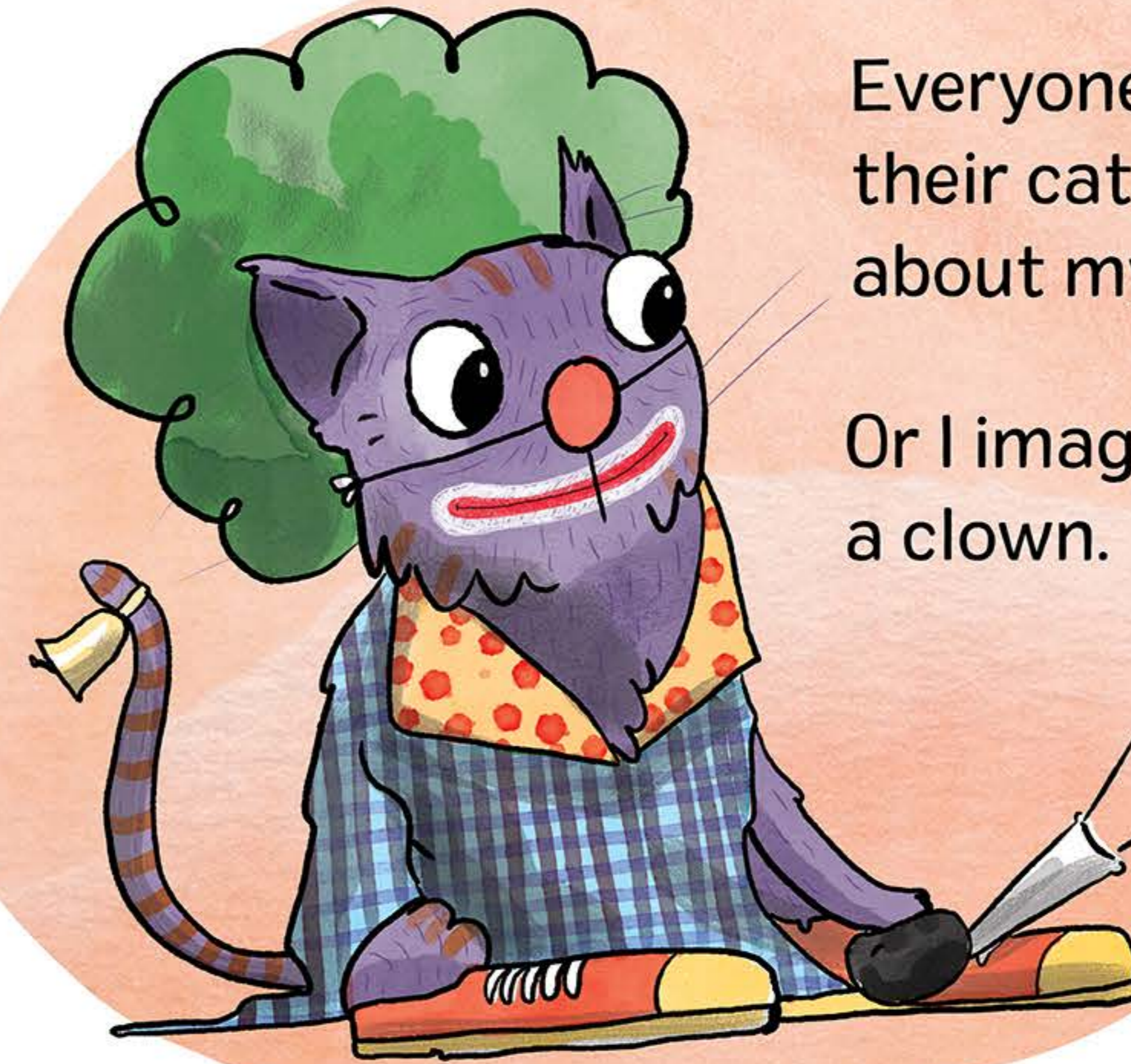
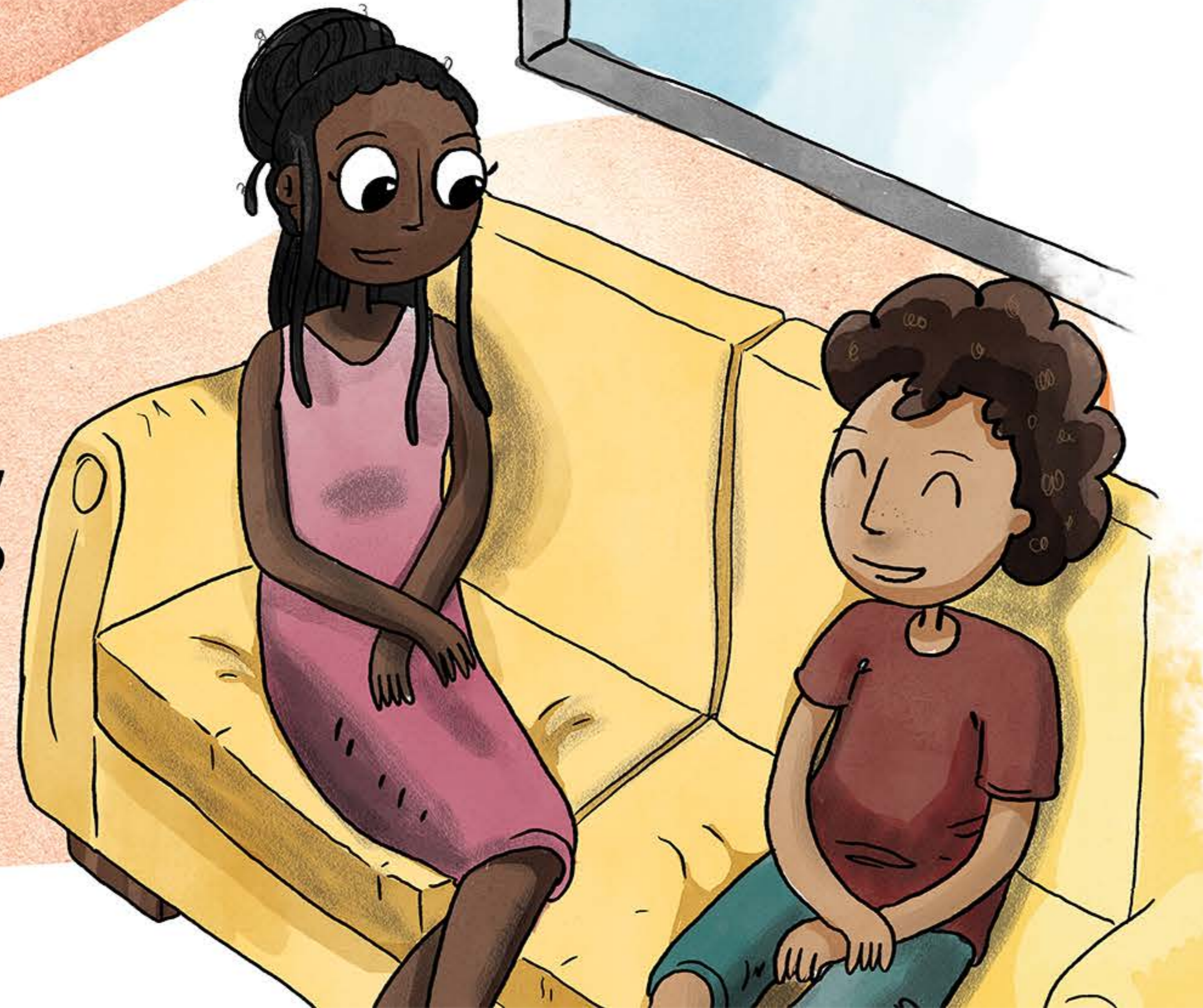
Mum's teaching Bryn to cook and I don't mind doing the hoovering.



Having flares and taking medicines can make me feel different from my friends. And sometimes I feel sad about my _____ cat never going away.



When I'm sad I tell my mum how I'm feeling. She told me it's ok to feel sad and there will be happy times too. Being different makes us who we are.



Everyone finds their own ways to get on with their cats. I try to make up funny stories about my cat to make people laugh. Or I imagine it dressed up as a clown.

It makes the cat seem smaller, even if it's really big at the time.





We are not alone.

There are thousands of people in the UK with Crohn's and Colitis cats. My family took me to an event run by Crohn's & Colitis UK where we got to meet other children and parents just like us.

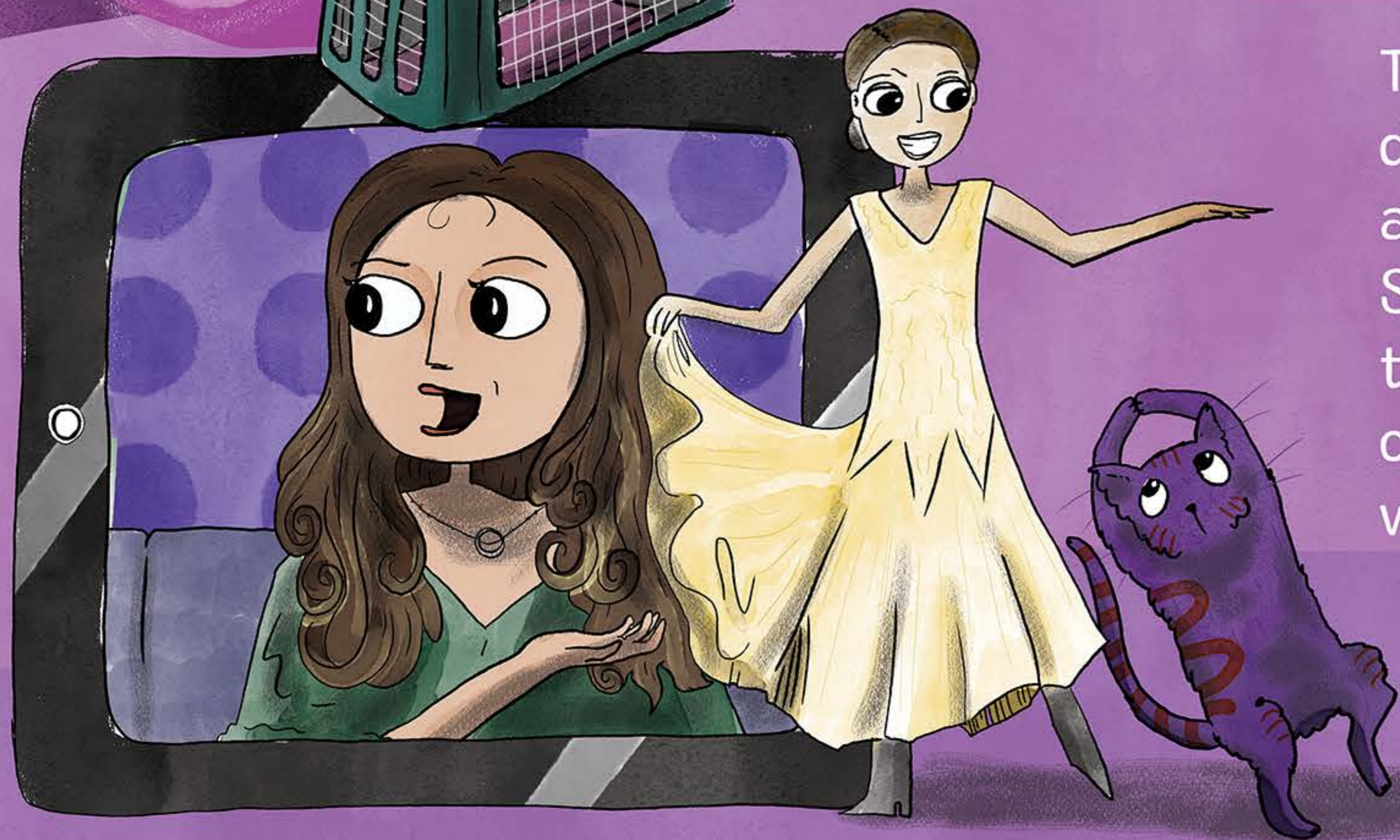
My mum also calls their Helpline when she has questions, or to speak to other parents who understand what it's like.



I love dancing because exercise makes my cat feel better. But I used to think I couldn't be a famous dancer if I had a cat, so I'd try to hide it.



Then I saw a famous dancer on TV talking about her Crohn's cat. She made me realise that as long as I take care of my cat, I can be whatever I want to be!



I don't try to hide my cat anymore. Telling my school friends and teacher was a bit scary, but now they understand why I'm sometimes not quite myself.





We'll always have our cats with us, but they're only part of who we are.

It takes guts to live with a Crohn's or Colitis cat, but together we can achieve anything!

The words we've used

Crohn's and Colitis Two different conditions that both make your gut sore and painful. Crohn's and Colitis can make you feel unwell and tired.

The gut Crohn's and Colitis are in a part of your body called the gut. The gut starts at your mouth and is where food goes after you eat it. Your gut goes all the way down your body, taking all the good stuff out of your food to give you energy to do things. The gut ends at your bum, where all the leftovers come out as poo.

Flare When your Crohn's or Colitis is making you feel unwell. In this book the cats are really big to show a flare.

Remission When you feel better. In this book the cats are really small to show remission. Crohn's and Colitis cats can't go away completely, but they can get small enough not to bother you.

Medicines Something you take to make your Crohn's or Colitis feel better.

Liquid food diet Extra food to give you more energy. Sometimes you'll drink it, other times you might have it through a tube in your nose.

Having an accident When you need to do a poo but don't make it to the toilet in time.

Emergency Kit A bag with things you'll need if you don't reach the toilet in time. It can include things to clean yourself and spare clothes.

Can't Wait Card A little card to show people that you have a medical condition and need to use the toilet urgently. You can get one by signing up to be a member at crohnsandcolitis.org.uk/membership

Helpline You can get information here to help you live well with Crohn's or Colitis. Call them on **0300 222 5700** or send an email to helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk



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